CONGRESS U.S.

Auburn Jany. 8. 1845. Mdy—

Soc. of Inquiry
in Princeton Semy. — Brethren,

I have been delegated by the Socy. of Inquiry connected with our Theol. Institution to continue with you a correspondence which by some reason has latterly been neglected. And though totally inexperienced in this duty, I assume it with pleasure in consideration of the fact that I can ~~write~~ to you as to those with whom I am well acquainted. Many among you have been my college & class mates — a few there are with whom I have often joined in prayer — & one who was to a great extent instrumental in bringing me as I trust to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been connected with this Seminary but two or three months; & yet I trust I can give you some conception of the feeling which exists on the subject of ~~Foreign~~ missions & other interests which are identified with this. Of course you are aware, that, in consequence of the death of our Professor, & the resignation of another, there has been ~~some~~ confusion in our arrangements of late; but from the commencement of this session matters have by degrees become more settled, and hereafter, probably, the number of students will be as many at least as heretofore. At present there are but about fourty regular members of this Institution. As to future settlement some of us have directed our attention to the West, influenced by the many & pressing calls from brethren there, and by the fact that the churches in this State are most generally supplied. Few, I fear — if any — have seriously thought of the foreign field. Surely it is but ~~natural~~ right that a fair and generous ratio should look away from home & country to the ever enslaved & degraded heathen — earnestly desire to plant the cross where Schwartz, Carey & Martyn labored & died. I hope that in time two or three at least who are now associated with us will cooperate with his own exertions in the assistance of the missionary. All of us human are naturally prone to do that wherein is least labor & self denial; & we need continued assistance from the Father of mercies to direct us in the path of duty & to encourage us when we falter, & strengthen us when we grow weak. The young divine is often advised to remain at home by his friends, who say that if the gospel is not preached here the fountains will be dried up: & if the fountain be dried up, the streams must of necessity cease to flow. I have often thought that if all were influenced on this subject as many ardent young men are - then none wd go forth to missy labor & the heathen nations might stretch forth their hands in vain. Thus we shd belie our profession as ministers of the gospel - as the followers of Christ, who has charged us to evangelize the world, & we shd live for ourselves & not for the glory of God. The fountain might possibly be pure - but it wd be in a high walled & deep based reservoir whence no streamlets cld go forth to fertilize & gladden the world. There are certainly many considerations to be noticed on inquiring our duty with regard to Foreign Missions - but beyond the limits of duty we should not stop. Among us there is some tho no remarkable interest in this important scheme. Our Monthly concerts are quite well attended, though short; & but little is done further than the reading of whatever correspondence may be in hand & of two reports each 15 minutes in length. Occasionally there are some remarks from one of the professors & the other usual exercises. It ~~must~~ can not fail of the notice of every christian that personal piety is identified with an interest in this great subject, & they must rise or fall together. Hence it must be confessed that here as in various (I might say most) parts of our country at the present time, practical piety is ~~has~~ not a high standard. We forget our high vocation - we forget our relation to God & our fearful responsibilities. Surely, if there is any one who should live near to God, it ought to be he who has heard the call of his Savior "follow me" & who has consecrated his time - his talents & his influence to preach Christ & him crucified. If there is any one whose duty it is to avoid the pleasures of the world it shd be he who professes to follow the example of Jesus & his disciples. We have in Auburn a remarkably interesting field for labor - the Prison Sabbath Schools - to which the students & a few brethren in the village devote an hour and a half every week. Many a man who cld not when entering the prison read a letter of our language has by this means not only perused & studied the Bible narrative but is to some degree fluent in reciting various passages of the word of life, and often has clear & comprehensive conceptions of the doctrines taught therein. Some few from time to time have been we trust savingly brought to a knowledge of their Lord & Savior. It is a most interesting spectacle to behold - the immense chapel filled with prisoners all listening eagerly to the words which fall from the teachers' lips. There appears to be a growing interest in the subject of religion in some places around us at this time

My duty as far as I know it consists now in requesting an immediate answer to these lines. Tell us Brethren of your welfare as regards your spiritual state. Tell us of your interests on the subject of Missions both Home & Foreign. Give us whatever information you may conceive to be ~~[illegible]~~ proper. In behalf of the Society I subscribe myself H. V. Rankin
one of the Committee of Correspondence
Aub. Theo Semy.

Society of Inquiry
Theological Seminary
Princeton
N. Jersey

Single

AUBURN N.Y.
JAN 8

Society, I wd here merely enjoin a few lines to Bro Duffield which I wd thank you to deliver him—
H V Rankin

John T. Duffield, I have recently purchased many years of the Princeton Repertory—1832—1838—1840, 1841—1842—1843—184
Write to me soon & tell me if you can the authors of the several pieces in these—also whether I can procure the rest of the whole set & if so at what price? I expect to go either to Princeton or Cincinnati next year— ~~[illegible]~~
Regards to all my friends— H. V. R.—